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ABSTRACT

For chronically troublesome students educational strategies of exclusion currently lead to revolving door syndrome, resulting in ever-increasing learning deficits, and further inappropriate behaviours. Strike Four is an educational paradigm servicing "category three alienated students" (exhibiting significant social and/or emotional difficulties and behavioural disorders) in retentive environments in Australia, with the goal that these young people re-enter mainstream, technical college, or the workforce by the end of the 19-weeks. A practitioner research model made simultaneous paradigm development and testing possible. The process of program development is reviewed including an ethos document, the behaviour management policy, the development of positive contracting as a tool, and the truancy policy. Under "Curriculum as a Tool to Shape Behaviour," the value of flexible curricula and the use of key teaching times are discussed. Teaching stories were developed and tested in the classroom to address specific life skills as situations arose. Programs employing Strike Four strategies have achieved close to 100% attendance and placement of students into work or technical college. A post-support program provided support to the transition to the workplace. These students were still functioning in their placements three months later. (EMK)

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Abstract

Strike Four is an educational paradigm servicing "category 3 alienated students" (exhibiting significant social and/or emotional difficulties and behavioural disorders) in retentive environments, whilst addressing their issues on-site. Various strategies make this possible: crises are golden teaching moments not a reason to exclude a student, curriculum is a tool to shape behaviour and modify the *modus operandi* of students, positive contracting can augment student self-control and behaviour self-management, and student empowerment in the educational environment can address truancy. Programs employing Strike Four strategies have achieved close to 100% attendance and placement of students into work or technical college. These students were still functioning in their placements three months later. A practitioner research model made simultaneous paradigm development and testing possible.

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Increased acceptance of human diversity has resulted in an extension of equity and human rights, giving many marginalised groups better access to mainstream education. Through this process, children previously marginalised through racial, ethnic, mental, physical, communication, or severe behavioural difference now have the right to access a place in mainstream. However one group of young people is still denied full access, despite being in the "compulsory education" age group. Students seen to be troublesome, whilst technically included in mainstream, are dealt with through school behaviour management policies that see them excluded, either temporarily through time-out or suspension, or permanently through expulsion, thereby depriving them of their right to a full education. Strike Four is an educational paradigm designed to service these students in retentive environments, where student issues are addressed as an integral part of all curricula, and where behaviour management polices, grounded in the local justice system, offer students empowering strategies to address their issues on-site. Practitioner research has made simultaneous paradigm development and testing possible.

The Good Old Days

At the end of the nineteenth century, non-compliant students could be caned, excluded, belittled, threatened or detained. Contrary to popular belief, that there were minimal

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behaviour problems in schools in those "good old days", Austin reports, that in Australia, in the late 1800s, teachers "came to dread the hours they were forced to spend in the midst of bedlam while their pupils abused and assaulted them, smashed windows and furniture, insulted passers-by and fought blasphemously amongst themselves" (Austin, 1965, p. 238). The mid-twentieth century brought recognition of children rights. The cane (banned in Western Australian Government Schools in 1987) and detention were discarded. New behaviour management policies were introduced. "By 1988, the Education Department [of Western Australia], ... required each of its schools to develop, implement and maintain a Discipline Policy" (Moore, 1997, p. 10) - time-out, suspension and expulsion were adopted.

These policies have proved largely ineffective as a means of instigating positive behaviour change in troublesome students. It is apparent that new strategies need to be devised to address the issues of these young people, whilst offering them ongoing retentive educational opportunities. Troublesome behaviour students are technically included in the mainstream, unless "they are diagnosed as disabled by the most stringent criteria, these children are not formally categorized with labels for which money has been earmarked to help cure" (Morgan, 1994, p. 4). Many of these young people have no measurable disorder, yet, "they are in school, day after day, struggling with issues that would arouse the anxiety and challenge the sanity of even the strongest adults" (Morgan, 1994, p. 4). If perceived to be disrupting curriculum-driven instruction, or presenting a threat to the safety of others, these young people are quickly dealt with through time-out, suspension or expulsion. As these behaviour management polices fail to address the young person's reasons for inappropriate behaviour, the students return to the classroom with their problems intact, disadvantaged, having missed chunks of their education.

For the chronically troublesome student, these policies lead to revolving door syndrome, resulting in ever-increasing learning deficits, leading to further inappropriate behaviours, as the young person gets educationally increasingly out of sync with the rest of the class. The young person becomes a martyr, an acceptable loss, sacrificed so that curriculum-driven instruction can continue for the valued others.

Strike Four

Strike Four is a set of practices and strategies currently being developed for servicing at-risk, alienated and troublesome behaviour students with retentive educational programs. The paradigm seeks to address the "three strikes and you're out" policy that sees troublesome behaviour students marginalised and excluded. Strike Four pivots on the notion that the

young person is not the sole miscreant in their failure to achieve and behave in mainstream. It recognises that appropriate opportunities are not always available in the current context.

Strike Four employs various shaping tools in order to retain all students in the learning environment, whilst addressing behaviours that would normally result in exclusion. Paradigm strategies include the use of crises as golden teaching moments, curriculum as a tool to address problematic behaviours whilst encouraging acceptance of personal responsibility for actions and choices, positive contracting offering skills for student self-control and behaviour self-management, reflective rather than reactive discipline and behaviours, and student self-empowerment as a driving force shaping the educational environment and curriculum. The paradigm seeks to positively affect the *modus operandi* of students and encourage a move from socially discouraged skills, to success grounded in socially endorsed choices and actions.

The Research Project

On this project I functioned as paradigm designer, researcher, coordinator and literacy lecturer. As I was both participant and researcher, modifications were applied immediately problems were identified. The intention was to offer a refined, tested-in-action model for use in other contexts.

The programs were run on various sites for 19 week periods. Each program serviced 15 "category 3 alienated students" (that is students with significant social and/or emotional difficulties and behavioural disorders, so severe they cannot be serviced in mainstream). Since 1995 sixty 14- 16 year old male and female year 10 students have been serviced through these programs. Fifteen additional students are currently being serviced.

Data was collected using a critical qualitative approach relying on case studies, student work, conflict resolution documents, incident reports, lecturer reports, youth work students' feedback, and daily diary entries. All case studies use composite characters and pseudonyms to maintain anonymity of participants.

The Ethos Document

In 1995 I accepted the position of literacy lecturer on an experimental program providing educational service to at-risk and excluded year ten students (the final year of compulsory education in Western Australia). I was employed mid-program. Student behaviour was totally out of control, but there were no tools to call into play to shape behaviour. So when I took

over the position of program coordinator in 1996, my first concern was to construct a teachers' toolbox. I called this the ethos document.

I believe, as Stoppleworth suggests, that "most disturbing behavior in the classroom is learned behavior; that it is maintained in existence by the consequences that it receives from its immediate environment" (Stoppleworth, 1974, p. 5), and that processes can be put in place to address these behaviours and encourage appropriate socially endorsed behaviours. I operated from a base accepting that inappropriate behaviours are the result of a variety of causes, and regardless of cause, good shaping tools can help modify behaviour. I was determined to come up with a functional model that would do more than facilitate teaching of the valued others. I wanted to offer the struggling troublesome student empowering positive strategies for life, and I wanted the classroom teacher to have a toolbox they could draw from to effectively shape both the teaching-learning environment and problematic student behaviours.

The first ethos document stated what was expected of the young people. It was signed by the student, parent/carer and program coordinator at orientation. It formed the base for behaviour management. The document made clear that our goals were not purely academic. All students were required to improve in all areas - attitude, academically and socially.

The ethos document was modified over time. It was gradually crafted into a more effective shaping tool and a tighter contract (for current version see Appendix A). Through use, the power of the document became apparent. It proved effective in shaping both student behaviours, and teaching styles at odds with paradigm ideology.

The Behaviour Management Policy

Whilst the ethos document contains the paradigm's basic shaping tools and is employed to encourage the general progress of the young people toward skills needed to succeed in the adult world, the behaviour management policy specifically addresses behaviour issues resulting in crises and conflicts. The significant aspects of the behaviour management policy are:

- its opposition to exclusion as a solution. The policy recognises that exclusion does not change behaviour, or provide strategies to manage future conflicts. Exclusion merely facilitates teaching to continue for the other students.
- it is based on the local justice system. Here both the young people and the teacher are given the opportunity to offer their side of what happened in the conflict or crisis and

adjudication is left to the program coordinator. Through the operation of the policy the young people develop an understanding of the local justice system and their skills for verbal self-defence are honed.

- it develops literacy, conflict resolution and problem solving skills as an integral part of behaviour management, whilst empowering the young people with skills to manage future crises or conflicts.
- it encourages group acceptance of responsibility, as witnesses are also encouraged to present their side of what happened and acknowledge their role in the conflict or crisis.
- it encourages reflective rather than reactive action. Here staff and students are asked to take time out from the conflict to reflect and write down their side of the story. Adjudication is not instant. There is time between conflict and action taken, for all parties to consider better ways to manage future conflicts.
- it encourages acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and choices.
- it offers opportunity for the student to be part of the solution, not just a problem to be addressed.

Completing behaviour management policy forms is taught as part of the literacy curriculum (see Appendix B). Through these exercises, students are taught the workings of the justice system, and how to use the behaviour management policy to get justice. The policy puts into practice the development of literacy and citizenship skills as an integral part of curriculum and behaviour management.

As with all policy, the behaviour management policy needs to be applied humanely, not to the letter, whilst endorsing right action and challenging injustice, in order to be seen as fair by all parties. Minor changes were made to increase equity and the potential for justice. This policy has run virtually trouble free for two years.

Positive Contracting

Our early student behaviour contracts were patterned on models in textbooks. Contracts were constructed in the midst of action. If a contract failed to achieve its goal, we tried a minor modification. Through one particular failure, where I boxed myself into an exclusion situation, something totally at odds with paradigm ideology, a new approach took form. I called it "positive contracting", as it focused on offering positive strategies to the troublesome young people to manage their unacceptable behaviours in the future.

Positive contracting was a reaction against negative exclusion-based styles of contracting, such as, "If Jim hits another student he will be suspended". This style of contracting merely tells the young person the repercussions of repeat inappropriate behaviours. Positive contracting works on the basis that merely telling someone not to do something again is often not enough. If the young person lacks strategies to change, they are destined to fail. Positive contracting offers a set of positive tools for the troublesome young person to experiment with, to self-manage their problematic behaviours in the future. For example:

A Contract for Maurice

If Maurice feels like punching a staff member or student again he will ask:

- to go and work-out on the punching bag
- to play shoot-em-ups on the computer to work out his aggressive feelings
- or to spend time outside on his own for a few minutes

Signed Maurice _____ Dated: _____
Signed Program Coordinator: _____ Dated: _____

Through the contract Maurice was encouraged to try out these strategies. He gradually took control of his own behaviours. He found ways to manage his aggressive feelings. Maurice found the punching bag, and time-out on his own, worked best for him. Students are encouraged to apply these strategies in other contexts. Maurice decided to get a punching bag to use at home.

Exclusion would have done nothing to empower Maurice to manage his problem behaviours. He had been regularly excluded since year one and was still exhibiting problematic behaviours in year 10. Maurice desperately wanted to remain on the program, but lacked strategies to manage his anger. Through positive contracting we helped him develop a set of strategies that worked for him. Merely enhancing his literacy and numeracy would not guarantee success in life, his lifeskills and behaviour issues were the major factor impeding his success. Through positive contracts most students developed a set of strategies to self-manage their problematic behaviours over the 19 week programs.

The Truancy Policy

On the 1995 program I asked one student how his truancy was dealt with in mainstream. He answered, "If I truanted for two weeks, I was given two weeks suspension. Then I could stay home for two weeks guilt free". The student was offered no empowering strategies to address his lack of interest in school. He was merely given two weeks off "guilt free".

Through suspension, the school contributed to his increased learning deficits, and he was less likely to be able to engage with the curriculum on his return.

The Strike Four truancy policy was an attempt to address the reasons behind truancy, whilst putting in place strategies to skill-up the young person with tools to better self-manage their educational marginalisation. The policy was first put in place in 1996. It was an attempt to transfer some of the responsibility for students skipping school "because it is boring", back onto the young people. Many chronic truants frame their justification for non-attendance in this way. I believe the young people share some of the responsibility, as they are participants in the teaching-learning environment. We operate on the notion that if they feel what is happening at school is boring, the mature way to deal with this is to take positive action to improve the situation, not deprive themselves of the opportunity to learn.

I first put the truancy policy into writing in The Teenage Survival Guide II: For Teenagers, Parents, Teachers and Youth Workers. The text states:

> **Truancy is an immature reaction to disliking what you're being taught. It won't teach you skills to manage the rest of your life.** You can't always dip out of what you don't want to do, so you might as well start learning skills now that will help you get what you want out of life. (Netolicky, 1996a, p. 35)

Our students are encouraged to develop empowering strategies to manage their environments. This is done through stories and work sheets such as "Negotiating a Deal" (Netolicky, 1996, pp. 10-11) and "Making Education Work for You" (Netolicky, 1996a, pp. 34-35). I believe every person has a right to know why they need to learn something. Students have the right, at the very least, to a simple explanation, such as, "This task is basic and in some ways boring, but you need to master these skills in order to be able to do the more complicated tasks ahead. Those tasks will have a direct use in your future". Even better is the example given in Scenario III in "Making Education Work for You". Here the student asks, "What use is that to us?", and the teacher replies:

> Well, for a start we can apply it to today and the rest of your lives. When you get into a company you'll begin at the bottom. You'll earn the lowest pay and have the least responsibility. As you move up the ranks you'll get more pay, but also more responsibility, so you pay for the social status and pay increase with higher stress due to increased responsibility. (Netolicky, 1996a, p. 34)

The student is given a real reason to pay attention and the lesson is enriched by being tied to the students' everyday lives.

As educators, we do not have an inherent right to waste students' time. We have an obligation to empower our students with skills to manage their future lives, whilst engaging them in the learning process by shaping content to their interests and needs. If content is perceived by students to have a meaning for them, the teaching-learning environment improves, students are engaged in learning, and teachers are engaged in teaching not behaviour management.

No truancy policy is enough to assure attendance. On Strike Four programs all students still absent fifteen minutes into class time are contacted. Many of our students have not attended school for a year or two. If necessary in the first few weeks we get someone to pick them up. Every attempt is made to address their problems whilst gradually handing over responsibility to the young people to attend regularly. We work on the basis that 50% attendance may be better than your past record, but it will not keep you in employment. The program is preparation for the world of work. Your boss will expect 100% attendance, so do we.

Through the truancy policy, disempowering attitudes to life are discouraged, and students are taught empowering ways to frame their problems and shape their present and future environments. The policy has proved effective over time. On the first program we had zero truancy days. On the second program we had a single student truant on two occasions in the first week. On the third program we lost two students in the first two weeks due to poor attendance and drug abuse. All other students attended regularly and took the policy seriously.

Students were encouraged to apply skills for negotiating curriculum to other contexts, such as home or work. Students demonstrated they were able to apply these skills in other contexts, as they were all still in their course of study, or place of work, three months after the program end. This would have not been possible if they were still choosing to not attend when things got tough or boring.

Curriculum as a Tool to Shape Behaviour

In teacher training we were taught the need for thorough preparation, detailed lessons plans and adherence to curriculum documents. Working with at-risk young people, I learned the value of flexible curricula and the use of key teaching times, where golden learning moments are harnessed and yoked to contemporary student experience.

1. My First Harnessed Golden Moment

The first story I wrote was written on pure instinct. I had been teaching on a program for at-risk teenagers for about a week. There had been a serious bullying incident after school on the previous day. Instinct dictated this was a golden opportunity to facilitate real learning. Students' choices and actions could have resulted in the hospitalisation or death of a fellow student. The student being bullied was having an asthma attack, yet the young people continued their bullying. Admittedly audience enthusiasm diminished as his condition deteriorated, but the students stood transfixed. No one chose to go to the young man's aid. I found this extremely disturbing. But peer group pressure and the desire to be seen as one of the in-group seemed an adequate deterrent to humane action. I felt there was a need to demonstrate the seriousness of this choice to conform.

I thought about running Lockie Leonard, human torpedo (Winton, 1990), but by the time we got to the relevant bit, the issue would be too far in their past. So I decided to write a simple, single page story and work sheet on the incident, in order to encourage the young people to acknowledge the possible repercussions of their actions and to consider better choices for similar future incidents.

I view bullying and victimisation as social phenomena. You cannot be a bully without a victim, or a victim in isolation, and an audience has influence here too. I saw this incident as a whole group problem that needed a whole group solution. I wrote "Top Dog" (Netolicky, 1996, pp.16- 17) the story and work sheet, and ran it in class the following morning. The young people engaged with the story. Most achieved three times their usual literacy scores. A number of students reconsidered their choices of action and demonstrated a deeper understanding of the social dynamics operating.

2. Consolidation of the Approach

The following day I wrote another story. I had a suspicion that one girl in the group was bulimic. I wrote "Big Butt Betty" (Netolicky, 1996, pp. 38- 39). After completing the story and work sheet two girls in the class admitted to being bulimic. We went on to address this issue through research projects.

After running "Top Dog" and "Big Butt Betty", it became apparent that these young people were interested in learning if curriculum content was tied to their real-life-issues. I began to feel that these young people had failed to succeed in the school environment, not because of poor literacy or numeracy, but because they had failed to adopt, or learn, behaviours

appropriate to the school environment. As our goal was to have these young people prepared for technical college or the world of work at the program end, we needed to enhance their lifeskills as well as their literacy and numeracy.

As the programs are only 19 weeks long, it became apparent that we needed to address life skill deficits through all curricula. Nearly all the stories in The Teenage Survival Guide: For Teenagers, Parents, Teachers and Youth Workers (Netolicky, 1996) and The Teenage Survival Guide II Guide: For Teenagers, Parents, Teachers and Youth Workers (Netolicky, 1996a) were the result of in-class issues. Hence, "Best Mates Don't Do That" (Netolicky, 1996, p. 4) was written to address a stealing incident, whilst "Every Day it's the Same" (Netolicky, 1996, p. 18) addressed victimisation in the class room. Stories, like "Negotiating a Deal" (Netolicky, 1996, p. 10), were written to teach skills of empowerment using a socially acceptable strategy. This strategy was then applied in a variety of contexts (school, work and home) to consolidate the skill.

3. Bioliteracy and Peer Group Pressure

These stories became springboards for other tasks. We used "Top Dog" (Netolicky, 1996, p. 16) as a base for augmenting bioliteracy. We talked about body language and how the class bully stood. He always stood too close to you with his head tilted up. He made you uncomfortable by standing in your personal space. The class victim always looked down. He stepped backwards if you walked forwards and always kept well out of your personal space. We moved into play acting. I asked a student to take up the stance of the victim, then take up the bully's stance. The students began to see the significance of body language and its covert messages.

As a class group we decided to help the victim change his body language. Every time he took on a victim posture, the other students pointed it out. It gradually became automatic. He began adjusting his posture himself. Their attempts to help gave him the attention he was seeking in a positive way. I saw this young man a year later. He was working at a supermarket. He had empowering body language. He looked like managerial material.

The lesson was taken further. We looked at the bully's social life. He had no equal friends. Everyone was uncomfortable around him. He was always domineering. I was worried about him keeping a job. He wanted an apprenticeship. No one would keep him on with his current body language. I explained that healthy people can move up and down the dominance-subservience spectrum. They can be assertive when necessary, and can follow when appropriate. The class worked with the bully. They pointed out when he was using

bullying body language. They pulled him into line. The positive attention he received when he was responding to their advice began to win him real friends and open opportunities for equal relationships. As the course progressed I watched him slowly relax and let down his guard. Some of the young people began to trust him and real friendships began to form. I believe he left the course a better adjusted person. He was offered an apprenticeship before the program end. He was still employed in that position a year later. Peer group pressure had worked, in both cases, as a positive force modifying the young people's *modus operandi*.

This incident, and the significant learning that resulted from the experience, altered my pedagogical practice. Through this exercise I realised that this group of 15 at-risk young people were capable of functioning as a positive shaping force. I began to see that peer group pressure could be harnessed as a powerful tool to shape behaviour.

4. A New Problem

On the fourth program I encountered a new problem. By this time I was convinced that the young people's *modus operandi* could be modified by employing relevant-to-the-moment curricula. The students had just returned from their first work experience. Half this group did not complete the work experience. I was concerned. I began asking questions. I found that those who had not completed the work experience came from homes where prostitution, drug dealing, and stealing were accepted ways of making a living. These young people failed to see the logic in working at a legitimate job for $5 an hour, when they could make $20 an hour dealing drugs, or $50 an hour as a prostitute.

I decided to write a series of work sheets to address this issue. The first work sheet was called "Making a Living" (see Appendix C). By the end of the work sheet, four of the young people who had chosen to become drug dealers had changed their minds after assessing the pros and cons of each profession. None of the young people who had chosen to work at Chicken Treat had changed their minds. This consolidated my belief in the potential for instigating positive behaviour change through curriculum.

Curriculum is now regarded as one of our key shaping tools. The tables of contents in The Teenage Survival Guide: For Teenagers, Parents, Teachers and Youth Workers (Netolicky, 1996) and The Teenage Survival Guide II Guide: For Teenagers, Parents, Teachers and Youth Workers (Netolicky, 1996a) list all critical issues in the stories. This facilitates a rapid search for relevant curriculum following a critical moment. In this way, all issues are addressed through curriculum at the first opportunity, and crises are often averted.

As all students must be classified category 3 alienated in order to be eligible for our programs, the fact they manage to maintain employment or retain their position in technical college for at least three months, demonstrates that they have left the program with enhanced skills to manage their problematic behaviours.

Findings and Recommendations

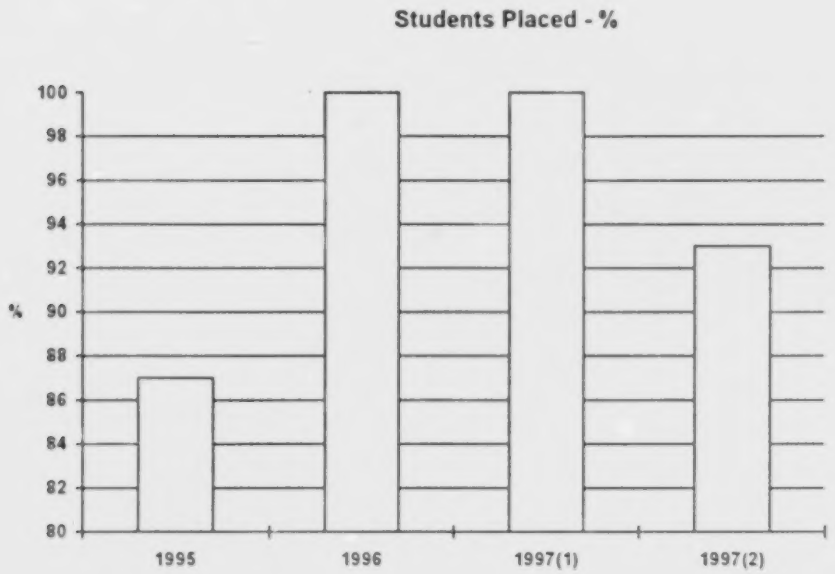
This study was undertaken in an attempt to understand why our programs were producing vastly better outcomes than other local alienated students' programs, and to further hone Strike Four strategies and polices. At alternative education conferences, I was hearing success rates of 50% attendance and 2- 10% placement spoken about with pride. As we regularly achieved close to 100% attendance and placement, I felt it was essential that we document what we were doing in order to ascertain if our success was due, as many claimed, to "my charismatic personality", or to strategies that had transportability into other contexts.

Through daily documentation, it became apparent, that a number of key strategies were contributing to our success. Harnessing crises as golden teaching moments was successful in maintaining the troublesome young people in the teaching-learning environment whilst addressing their issues on-site. The use of curriculum as a tool to shape behaviour proved effective. On some work sheets change was observed in a single work sheet. At times stories written for past programs were adequate, at other times it was necessary to generate new curriculum for new crises. However, both the re-application of stories written for other groups, and the application of new materials, demonstrated that the young people were engaged in the activity and applying the lesson to their personal experiences. Positive contracting helped many of our students develop strategies to address their behaviour issues, whilst being retained on-site, thereby avoiding an increase in learning deficits.

In order to be referred to the program students have to be classified category 3 alienated. Our program goal is to have these young people able to re-enter mainstream, technical college, or the work force by the end of the 19 week program. Many of these young people have not attended school for up to two years, or have been in almost permanent suspension or expulsion. In 1995 13/15 students were placed in work and during the program marked improvement in attendance was noted. Introduction of the ethos document, truancy policy, and behaviour management policy resulted in better outcomes in 1996 and 1997. In 1996, and the first 1997 group, nearly 100% attendance was achieved with chronic truants. All students in the 1996, and the first 1997 group, were successfully placed in apprenticeships, work or technical college (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Percentage of Students Successfully Placed at Program End

Program	% placed	No of students placed	Total No of students
1995	87	13	15
1996	100	15	15
1997(1)	100	15	15
1997(2)	93	14	15



A post-support program of three months provided support in the period of transition to the workplace. The 1995, 1996 groups, and the first group from 1997, were all still in their placements three months down the track. From the second 1997 group, 13/15 young people are currently in work, technical college, or have chosen to return to mainstream. One young man is still actively seeking work. One female student has chosen to defer taking up her technical college place until mid-year as she is currently homeless. These young people are being supported in the period of transition. Even the young girl who chose to "deal drugs for her Dad rather than work at Chicken Treat" is now working at a supermarket. The young man who wanted his little brother " to deal drugs to the primary school kids so he wouldn't have to work", now has an apprenticeship.

Whilst the Strike Four paradigm does not claim to be a panacea, it is trialing new ways to offer service to young people caught in the revolving door syndrome. We have witnessed an extension of equity and human rights, giving many marginalised groups better access to

mainstream education. Troublesome students need to be included in this initiative. All young people have the right to a full and appropriate education. This issue needs to be addressed so that all young people can be adequately serviced with positive, appropriate, retentive educational programs. The cost of the programs, per individual, is about the same as three weeks in jail, or six months on unemployment. These young people can cause this much damage in one night's vandalism. Through these programs, these young people have developed positive strategies for managing their unacceptable behaviours, positive attitudes to legitimate employment, and skills to succeed in the adult world. Many of these young people were offered jobs on work experience based on their performance in the workplace. I regard this as a type of external examination of their new behaviours. These young people moved from being a drain on community resources, to contributing to those resources. Programs of this sort pay off. Our past students are not on unemployment benefits, they are not incarcerated for stealing or vandalism, they are employed and proving to be positive role models for their families and peers. Many of their parents, siblings and peers have approached us since these programs began and we have helped them move on to appropriate courses and opportunities. The spin-offs cannot be simply measured by the improvement to the lives of the students, whole communities are affected by the potential for better futures.

Acknowledgment

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Appendix A

THE ETHOS DOCUMENT

The ethos of the program is:

- all staff and students have a right to be treated with respect.
- **everyone has a right to feel safe** in the teaching-learning environment.
- teaching materials will **relate to student needs wherever possible.**
- curriculum is flexible and can meet each young person's needs. **Teachers agree to attempt to meet these needs.**
- **truancy is regarded as an immature reaction to dissatisfaction with the curriculum, as students can negotiate for appropriate and interesting materials.**
- **all students are acceptable at their entry level.** It is expected that entry levels will differ greatly. It is acknowledged that students enter the program from a wide variety of backgrounds and social niches and with a broad spectrum of end goals. All students are required to continually move toward more acceptable behaviours. **Individuals are expected to improve, not be perfect.**
- **students will be excluded from the program only if all other possibilities have been exhausted.**

By the end of the course students must demonstrate that they are functioning at an adequate level to operate responsibly in the adult world. This may involve returning to post compulsory education, entering the work force, taking up an apprenticeship or entering a TAFE program or other post secondary institution. All these avenues require certain behaviours, skills and attitudes. Students on the program are expected to demonstrate an attempt to achieve these behaviours, skills and attitudes during the program:

- capability to **interact with people on the premises in a responsible manner.**
- **respect for the property of others and respect for program property.**
- **progress toward workplace skills and attitudes.**
- **improved literacy and numeracy** levels appropriate to their future workplace and lifestyle.
- **comply with workplace requirements** - such as regular attendance and arriving and leaving as specified.
- **do work experience** to demonstrate ability to function in an adult environment.
- make their way to and from the workplace, **arriving promptly and conducting themselves appropriately.**

To remain on the program students need to agree to **demonstrate effort** to make personal progress in all areas - **academic, social and attitudes.** Staff agree **to attempt** to make curriculum interesting and relevant for each student.

As a student on The VIP Program I, _____, agree to make an effort to work within the program ethos (operating principles) and make an effort to progress in all areas.

Signed by the Student: _____ Date: __/__/__

Sighted by Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: __/__/__

As teachers on the VIP Program we agree to work within the program ethos and to attempt to make curriculum interesting and relevant.

Signed by the Staff:_____ Date: __/__/__

_____Date: / / _____ Date: __/__/__

_____Date: / / _____ Date: __/__/__

Signed by Program Coordinator: _____ Date: __/__/__

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Appendix B

Oral Communication 2
Learning to use the Behaviour Management Policy

1. Our behaviour management policy is based on the justice system. **This means that you will always get a chance to defend yourself.** This is a skill you can use all your life. You may have to use it if you're arrested, you may use it if you're arguing with parents, carers or friends or you may use it with your bosses at work. So it's worth developing the skill here.

If a lecturer thinks you have done something against program policy, they will ask you to fill out a self defence form. **The lecturer will have to fill out a form too** and the program coordinator will decide what is to be done about it. It's like in a law court - you are the accused, the lecturer is the prosecutor and the program coordinator is the judge. The lecturer can't always see everything that goes on in the classroom as they are busy doing their job, so you may be innocent, or you may have a reason for what happened. **On this program you get the chance to offer a defence for your actions, or to show what in court is called 'remorse'.** If you show remorse (that means you are sorry for what happened) the judge is usually lenient (gives you a lesser sentence). Also here you are also offered the chance to suggest how to avoid a conflict in the future. If you word this carefully, the program coordinator may use this in making a decision on what action should be taken, or no action may need to be taken if the program coordinator believes you have sorted out the problem.

If you take this chance to tell your side of what happened you will be in a much better situation. Maybe you weren't the only student doing it, maybe the lecturer only saw you. Maybe another student got you into trouble. Maybe you admit to having done it and work out a solution so you won't get into the situation again. The program coordinator will take all these things into consideration when deciding what to do about it. So take the chance to defend your actions and offer solutions.

Here are two examples of a form filled out by Cliff Jones. In the first one he didn't take it too seriously. In the second one he was trying to defend his actions.

FORM 1
Self Defence Form

Name: Cliff Jones
Date of initial conflict: 10/10/97
Location: City Farm excursion
Others involved in the conflict: Mario Bath
Student's account of what happened: **We were bored and locked Jim in the shed.**
How I feel I may have contributed to the conflict: **I just watched.**
How I feel other's actions contributed to the conflict: **I won't say.**
How I believe the issue should be resolved: **Don't lock Jim in the shed again.**
How I can stop it happening again: **All I did was watch.**
Final agreement to resolve conflict: **Don't watch next time.**
I agree to avoid a repeat of this behaviour. I recognise that if I fail to comply with this my parents may be contacted.
Signed (student):..... Date:.....
Signed (person in charge): .....Date:.....

FORM 2
Self Defence Form

Name: Cliff Jones
Date of initial conflict: 10/10/97
Location: City Farm excursion
Others involved in the conflict: Mario Bath
Student's account of what happened: **Jim had been flicking sand at us all morning. We were all really angry with him. So we locked him in the shed at afternoon break.**
How I feel I may have contributed to the conflict: **I encouraged the others to do it. I was sick of him throwing sand at us. He never gets caught so the teacher thinks he's good and we're bad. He's always bugging us and getting us into trouble.**
How I feel other's actions contributed to the conflict: **We all did it but we were really angry.**

How I believe the issue should be resolved: **Next time we should all talk to the teacher or find a safer way to teach him a lesson. He could have suffocated in the shed as there are no windows. We didn't think about it, we just did it. Next time we need to think first.**
How I can stop it happening again: **Talk the others into finding a different way to stop Jim getting us into trouble. He always gets us into trouble and we fell for it again.**

Final agreement to resolve conflict: **Next time don't fall into Jim's trap. Maybe move away from him and work somewhere else or get together as a group and talk to the teacher about it.**
I agree to avoid a repeat of this behaviour. I recognise that if I fail to comply with this my parents may be contacted.
Signed (student):..... Date:.....
Signed (person in charge): .....Date:.....

2. **Work in pairs**. To which of Cliff's responses would you be more lenient (give a lesser or no punishment)? Why? **Give at least three reasons**.

_____
_____
_____

3. **Work in pairs**. You and Marina are working on work sheets. She keeps scribbling on your book. Eventually you get really fed up. You pick up her book and rip it in half. The teacher sees it and gives you a self defence form. Fill in the form offering a defence for your actions and suggesting how you can deal with the problem in a more mature way next time. This does not have to involve dobbing her in, but you can if you like.

Self Defence Form

Name: _____
Date of initial conflict: _____
Location: _____
Others involved in the conflict: _____
_____
Student's account of what happened: _____
_____
_____
How I feel I may have contributed to the conflict: _____
_____
How I feel other's actions contributed to the conflict: _____
_____
How I believe the issue should be resolved: _____
_____
How I can stop it happening again: _____
_____
Final agreement to resolve conflict: _____
_____
I agree to avoid a repeat of this behaviour. I recognise that if I fail to comply with this my parents may be contacted.
Signed (student):_____ Date: _____
Signed (person in charge): _____ Date: _____
Action to be taken: _____
_____
This decision has been discussed with me and I accept the judgement as fair.
Signed student: _____ Date: _____
Witnessed Program Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

4. Group discussion of strategies used on Self Defence form.

Appendix C

MAKING A LIVING - Choices for life

1. You have three job opportunities:
a. you can work in the local Chicken Treat and earn $7 per hour.
b. you can work for the local drug dealer and earn $20 per hour (when you're not in jail).
c. you can work as a prostitute and earn $ 30 an hour (but you risk getting AIDS and STDs).
Which job are you going to take and why?

_____
_____
_____

2. When choosing one of the above professions what mattered most to you? (circle your answer)
a. your self respect.
b. the money.
c. staying out of jail and disease free.
d. earning an income legally.

3. If you choose to work for the drug dealer what are the benefits and disadvantages (you need to have benefits and disadvantages to get a level three pass)?

_____
_____
_____

4. If you work as the prostitute what are the benefits and disadvantages (you need to have benefits and disadvantages to get a level three pass)?

_____
_____
_____

5. If you choose to work at Chicken Treat what are the benefits and disadvantages (you need to have benefits and disadvantages to get a level three pass)?

_____
_____
_____

6. Do you still feel you made the best career decision at the beginning of the work sheet? Why or why not?

_____
_____